

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018

## Trinity 20

Proper 24 **Green**



### Collect

God, the giver of life, whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church: by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ and make us eager to do your will, that we may share with the whole creation the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

**Hebrews 5:1-10** English Standard Version (ESV)

### Jesus the Great High Priest

5<sup>1</sup> For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. <sup>3</sup> Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. <sup>4</sup> And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. <sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; <sup>6</sup> as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." <sup>7</sup> In the days of his flesh, Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup> being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

**Footnote:** a. Greek *he*.

**COMMENT:** The passage defines the role of the ideal priest expressed as the representative of others. Accordingly, he offers the

appropriate sacrifice on the Jewish feast of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Some of the priests were not good examples of the Aaronic Priesthood, such as Annas and Caiaphas who played a role in the crucifixion of Jesus. Perhaps that explains why the author of this letter refers specifically to Aaron, the original high priest according to the priestly tradition of the Pentateuch (Exodus 28-29) and Chronicles (1 Chronicles 24:1). Indeed, the latter part of the Book of Exodus and the whole of Leviticus and Numbers focus overwhelmingly on Aaron and his functions as high priest of Israel. In order to draw the parallel between the high priest and Christ, however, the author goes further back into the Israelite tradition to the mysterious figure of Melchizedek, an ancient Canaanite priest-king of Salem to whom Abraham submitted and paid tribute (Genesis 14:17-24). Consequently, Melchizedek was regarded as superior to both Abraham, his descendent, Aaron, and the Aaronic priesthood. Fragments of text from one of the Dead Sea Scrolls revealed that the Melchizedek tradition was very much alive in late Judaism. It would appear that this tradition was well-known to the author of this letter and perhaps to his audience. Further, Melchizedek served an even more important purpose for this author. He became the core of his messianic argument. By introducing Melchizedek in relation to Jesus here and much more explicitly in chapter 7, the author of the letter is making a profound messianic confession. Jesus, the Man of Galilee who is the Son of God, fulfilled all the conditions as the ideal priest. By his obedience, suffering and death, the representative of God and humanity wrought the atonement God intends for human salvation.

### **Mark 10:35-45** English Standard Version (ESV)

#### **The Request of James and John**

10<sup>35</sup> And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”<sup>36</sup> And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”<sup>37</sup> And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”<sup>38</sup> Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”<sup>39</sup> And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized,<sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for

whom it has been prepared.”<sup>41</sup> And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.<sup>42</sup> And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.<sup>43</sup> But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,<sup>[a]</sup><sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave<sup>[b]</sup> of all.<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Footnotes:**

a. Greek *diakonos*

b. Greek *bondservant* (*doulos*)

**COMMENT:** Their conviction that he is the Messiah firmly established, James and John boldly put to Jesus their request for precedence in the messianic kingdom. As he so often did, Jesus responded with another question. His question symbolised his suffering and death in the sacramental language of cup and baptism the church still uses to tell of its meaning.

**Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c** *Benedic, anima mea* Grail Psalter

**℟ Bless the Lord, my soul!**

<sup>1</sup> Bless the Lord, my soul!

Lord God, how great you are,  
clothed in majesty and glory,

<sup>2</sup> wrapped in light as in a robe! ℟

You stretch out the heavens like a tent.

<sup>3</sup> Above the rains you build your dwelling.

You make the clouds your chariot,  
you walk on the wings of the wind,

<sup>4</sup> you make the winds your messengers  
and flashing fire your servants. ℟

<sup>5</sup> You founded the earth on its base,  
to stand firm from age to age.

<sup>6</sup> You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:  
the waters stood higher than the mountains. ℟

<sup>7</sup> At your threat they took to flight;  
at the voice of your thunder they fled.

<sup>8</sup> They rose over the mountains and flowed down  
to the place which you had appointed.

<sup>9</sup> You set limits they might not pass  
lest they return to cover the earth.

**R** Bless the Lord, my soul!

<sup>24</sup> How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.

The earth is full of your riches.

<sup>35c</sup> Alleluia **R**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** This magnificent hymn of praise blesses God as the Creator and Upholder of all. Creation and control of nature by a supernatural power found expression in many cultures of the ancient world. The Jewish faith affirmed that the God of Israel brought all things into being and saw that they were good.

### **Post Communion**

God our Father, whose Son, the light unfailing, has come from heaven to deliver the world from the darkness of ignorance: let these holy mysteries open the eyes of our understanding that we may know the way of life, and walk in it without stumbling; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **The Blessing**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep *your* hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**